DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 182 780 CS 502 799

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TITLE Seriousness, Attribution of Responsibility, and Status of the Actor as Determinants of Punitive Responses to Socially Proscribed Behavior.
PUB DATE Nov 79
NOTE 21p.: Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association (65th, San Antonio, TX, November 10-13, 1979)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Attribution Theory: Cheating: College Students: *Decision Making: *Discipline: Group Dynamics: Higher Education: Interaction Process Analysis: *Misbehavior: Plagiarism: Punishment: Research: *Social Attitudes: *Social Status: Speech Communication

ABSTRACT

After 24 triads of college students discussed hypothetical situations of serious and moderately serious acts of plagiarism by either high or low status individuals, they designated a punishment. The hypothesis was that the severity of the sanction would be a joint function of the severity of the act, the attribution of responsibility for the act, and the status of the actor/perpetrator. Although the seriousness and attribution variables affected sanctioning as expected, status failed to reveal a mediating influence in the judgmental process. Possible explanations for the lack of status effects are the hypothetical nature of the situations, the possibility that status is a nonlinear interactant with sanctions, and that loss of status as a result of the proscribed behavior may eliminate it as a factor. The data nevertheless permit a partial description of the judgmental process for determining sanctions. It appears that as the seriousness of a violation of accepted standards of behavior increases, so does the tendency to hold or view the violator as personally responsible. The greater the attribution of personal responsibility, the more severe the sanction. Seriousness alone can predict the severity of response, but it does not adequately account for how the judgments are made or their variation. (RL)

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SERIOUSNESS, ATTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITY, AND STATUS OF THE ACTOR AS DETERMINANTS OF PUNITIVE RESPONSES TO SOCIALLY PROSCRIBED BEHAVIOR

Dennis S. Gouran
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Instances of socially proscribed behavior are frequently confronted by decision-making groups empowered to recommend sanctions for the perpetrators. Juries, review boards, and grievance committees are common examples of groups assigned to perform this kind of task. Although charged with the responsibility of functioning dispassionately, experience tells us that such groups do not always achieve the ideal of impartial and even-handed administration of justice. A considerable body of evidence demonstrates that different groups often sanction essentially similar acts with substantially different degrees of severity. This suggests that, in addition to the act itself, some implicit process involving the characteristics of the actor and those recommending a particular penalty may affect the judgment rendered. The purpose of the following investigation was to determine if some of the obvious complexity of this decisional process could be unraveled.

Theoretical Rationale and Related Research

On first thought, the sanctioning of socially proscribed behavior appears as if it should be a relatively simple, rational, and straightforward process. Confronted with the occurrence of such behavior, those possessing the power to recommend sanctions form a judgment linking the appropriate penalty to the act in question. Even when penalties are defined in terms of the seriousness of acts, however, consistent judgments are not easily determined. Certain individuals guilty of the same offenses for which others are severely sanctioned appear to escape with relative impunity. Kaplan for instance notes a substantial body of evidence from actual court cases showing more negative judgments in trials involving defendants of low socio-economic status than those involving individuals higher on the scale.[1] The

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existence of such differences suggests possible interplay among several constituent influences.

Three factors that ostensibly impinge upon the penalty group members will recommend for a given instance of socially proscribed behavior are (1) the seriousness of the offense, (2) the extent to which the judges perceive the actor to be personally responsible, and (3) the status of the actor. As the following analysis will show, however, the interrelationships among these factors are likely complex. Their probable interaction is such that an increase in the severity of response attributable to one may be counteracted by the mitigating influence of another. For instance, the advantage of one's status might be offset by the perception that the individual has acted intentionally to violate an accepted standard of behavior. As a result, the individual is subject to more severe rather than less severe sanction.

That members of groups sanction serious offenses more severely than moderate ones has been clearly demonstrated in a number of studies.[2] Wahrman, for example, discovered that stealing a tip from a restaurant (serious offense) was subject to much more severe penalty than lying to protect a friend (mild offense).[3] Mudd studied the nature of the relationship and found that the severity of sanction increases as a negatively accelerating function of the degree to which behavior departs from established norms.[4]

While clearly relevant, the seriousness of a sanctionable act undoubtedly is not the only determinant of the severity of response. Potentially as relevant is the extent to which an observer holds the actor responsible versus the perception of external influences that may in some way justify or excuse the act. Theoretically, as the seriousness of a proscribed act increases, so does the tendency to perceive the actor as personally responsible. This principle is a logical extension of Heider's theory of the attribution of intentions and, more specifically, Jones and Davis's notion that the attribution of intention increases as behavior departs from

the typical person's behavior under the same circumstances.[5]

Jones, Davis, and Gergan discovered a tendency for attribution of disposition and effect to be more correspondent in cases involving "out of role" behavior than in those involving "in role" behavior.[6] The former, according to Jones and Davis, "cries for explanation."[7] Attribution of responsibility, then, would appear to covary with the perceived seriousness of a socially proscribed act. One would not expect both factors to have exactly the same relationship to the severity of response, however. Two observers conceivably might recommend different sanctions for the same act if they attribute different degrees of responsibility to the actor. Since the two influences, in all probability, are not perfectly correlated, then their joint consideration might account for more variation in judgment than either in isolation.

The perception of personal responsibility for an act may be further mitigated by the status of the actor, in which case the imposition of sanctions would also be affected. An individual possessing high status could well be perceived as less personally responsible, or in some cases more responsible, for the same act than one having low status. Asch, for example, has argued that, from a perceptual perspective, the suggestion of prestige actually changes an object of judgment.[8] Hence, an act attributed to a high status actor, perceptually speaking, may not be the same act when attributed to an actor of low status.

Unfortunately, previous scholarship has not established a substantial enough foundation to specify with confidence the probable relationship of status to the attribution of responsibility or to the perceived seriousness of socially proscribed behavior. It is clear, however, that when it comes to the application of penalties, persons of high and low status are treated differently for similar, or even identical, behavior. In Hollander's view, high status enables one to deviate from established norms with virtual impunity.[9] This position is substantiated by a

number of findings.

Schwartz and Skolnick report finding that unskilled workers accused, but acquitted, of assault and battery had difficulty obtaining employment, whereas medical doctors accused of malpractice, whether acquitted or not, continued to thrive in their profession and were frequently "more sought after than before."[10] Harari and McDavid discovered that classmates more readily reported a student observed stealing money from a teacher's desk when the student was of low status.[11] More recently, Wahrman noted significantly more lenient treatment of high status group members than low status members having committed identical violations of their groups' social norms.[12]

Several studies, on the other hand, support the notion that individuals possessing high status are more severely sanctioned for deviance than those of low status. Wiggins, Dill, and Schwartz uncovered evidence of a tendency to sanction a highly competent confederate whose violations of procedural rules in an experiment caused his group to be penalized more harshly than a moderately competent individual guilty of the same offense.[13] Walster et al., Rokeach and Rothman, and Wyer all have produced similar evidence of such overreaction.[14]

On balance, the preponderance of evidence suggests that high status is more likely to be an asset than a liability in cases involving non-normative behavior, particularly if it is socially proscribed.[15] Whichever of the bodies of competing evidence more accurately reflects reality, the clear implication of both is that status makes a difference. If both tendencies are operative in a given situation, such knowledge would permit even greater understanding of inconsistencies in punitive responses within and between groups.

Research Hypothesis

The general research hypothesis implicit in the preceding discussion is that

the severity of the sanction group members recommend in judging a socially proscribed act is a joint function of the severity of the act, the attribution of responsibility for the act, and the status of the actor. More specifically, we felt that severity would increase with seriousness and perceived personal responsibility and decrease with the actor's status. Because we had no firm basis from which to predict the exact nature of the mutual influence any one factor might exert on the others, we did not attempt to formulate the research hypothesis in more precise terms.

Procedure

To assure a range in judgment, we constructed two case studies involving moderate and serious dishonesty displayed by persons of high and low status.[16] Seriousness was manipulated in terms of the degree to which the acts departed from a standard defining acceptable behavior, and status was manipulated by means of description. Attribution of responsibility could not be manipulated and, hence, was left as a response variable. Because both manipulated variables were crucial to the research hypothesis, we pretested the cases and status descriptions to determine whether they would adequately serve their intended functions.

The first case involved a journalism student who reportedly turned in for one assignment in a news writing course a supposedly original editorial in which he borrowed the basic organization, arguments, and support from a published editorial by William F. Buckley, Jr. (Moderately Serious Act). The other case focused on a senior theatre major who had copied an entire lesser known one-act play by Tennessee Williams word for word and submitted it to meet the requirements for a course in play writing (Serious Act). In this case, the play was the only assignment.

The person to whom the offense was attributed in each case was described in one of four ways to produce an impression of status. Each description provided information about personality characteristics; for example, "His typical approach to other

students was to play 'Goodtime Charley' while his strategy with professors was one of ingratiation" (Low Status). We also provided information concerning activities and prior achievement; for instance, "[He] played several major roles in the college's theatre productions, was a member of Phi Beta Kappa, and was serving as Vice-President of the student body" (High Status). Although there were only two levels of status, the cases necessitated adaptation of the descriptions to fit with the rest of the information. All four descriptions were written so as to convey impressions of status on which the offenders were to be evaluated. As Wahrman notes, these are common factors in studies of status and constitute indices of the esteem in which one is held.[17]

The set of descriptions and the two case studies were given separately to 56 raters drawn from the same population as those who would be subsequently discussing them. The raters evaluated the cases on an 11 point scale, with 1 representing the least dishonest extreme and 11 representing serious dishonesty. A t-test for correlated measures was made to determine that two distinct levels of seriousness would be perceived. The results [$\overline{D} = 2.03$: t (df=54) = 2.45, $p < .05$] suggested that they would.

The same raters also reacted to the status descriptions on 11 point scales, with 1 and 11 representing the low and high extremes in status respectively. Mean differences in the ratings of both sets of descriptions proved significant [$\overline{D} = 6.68$ (High and Low Status Journalism Student): t (df=54) = 9.26, $p < .01$ and $\overline{D} = 5.92$ (High and Low Status Theatre Student): t (df=54) = 8.90, $p < .01$].

On the basis of the pretest, the status descriptions and cases were combined to represent four combinations of the two variables: (1) High Status Actor/Serious Act, (2) High Status Actor/Moderately Serious Act, (3) Low Status Actor/Serious Act, and (4) Low Status Actor/Moderately Serious Act. These four versions of cases involving intellectual dishonesty constituted the material for discussion by the

participants in the main portion of the investigation.

Volunteers (n=72) from introductory courses in communication were divided at random into 24 three-member groups. Every group participated in two discussions. Half discussed the "High Status Actor/Serious Act" and the "Low Status Actor/Moderately Serious Act" cases while the other half discussed the "Low Status Actor/Serious Act" and "High Status Actor/Moderately Serious Act" cases. In addition, we reversed the sequence of cases within conditions to control for possible privacy and recency effects. This procedure allowed for a total of 144 responses for each of the measures used.

Upon arriving for the discussions, each group was escorted to a small conference room and seated at one end of a conference table. The participants were informed that the purpose of the study was to examine group interaction characteristics and that to facilitate the analysis their discussions would be videotaped from behind a one way mirror in the adjacent room. Each person was then given a copy of the appropriate case to consider the relative merit of several responses to the act in question:

A. The student should be given a chance to redo the assignment.

B. The student should be given an F for the assignment, required to redo it, and given the average of the two grades.

C. The student should be given an F for the assignment with no opportunity to redo it.

D. The student should be given an F for the course.

E. The student should be dismissed from the university.

At the end of each group's first discussion, one of the investigators returned and distributed a questionnaire requesting that the discussants individually choose the option they believed most appropriate for the act they had just considered. In addition, they were asked to choose from the following series of statements the one

most accurately characterizing the behavior of the student in the case and their reaction to that behavior:

A. The individual in the case was totally responsible for his act and therefore should be held totally accountable.

B. Although the behavior of the individual in the case was partially a result of circumstances beyond his control, he was nevertheless largely responsible for his act and therefore should be held largely accountable.

C. Circumstances were as much responsible for the individual's act as the individual himself, and therefore, both must be equally taken into account.

D. Circumstances were largely responsible for the individual's act, and, therefore, he should be held only partially accountable.

E. Because of the circumstances in which the act occurred the individual in the case was not responsible for his behavior and therefore should not be held accountable.

Finally, the participants indicated their perceptions of the seriousness of the act and the status of the actor on seven point bipolar scales similar to those used in the pretest. Among other things, the pretest indicated that more than seven points was unnecessary for achieving adequate discrimination in ratings. After completing the questionnaires, the groups discussed the second case under identical circumstances. They were thanked for their involvement and assured that they could discuss the results after they were analyzed.

Criterion Measures

The first set of options among which the participants chose constituted the measure of severity of sanction. These items had been pretested by having an independent group of 72 raters classify them in terms of their relative severity. The method of equal-appearing intervals revealed that actual scale distances did not

substantially deviate from equality.[18] As a result, the items were scored from 1 to 5, with 1 representing option A, 2 representing B, and so on.

The items used to measure attribution of responsibility were originally adapted from Heider's five levels of sophistication in attribution and represented a range from complete personal responsibility to no personal responsibility.[19] Again, pretesting with the same set of raters revealed that the options approximated an interval scale. A value of 1 was therefore assigned to option A, 2 to B, and so on.

In addition to recommending sanctions and assessing responsibility, the group members indicated their perceptions of the seriousness of the acts they discussed and the status of the actor. Perceptions of status were measured in terms of the admirability and competence of the actor on separate scales. These two dimensions appeared to be the most potentially relevant of those we could have chosen. In both cases, ratings were based on perceptions of how the participants viewed the qualities of the actors independently of their acts.

The test-retest reliability of the response measures was determined from a subsample of the original participants. A few days after the discussions, we contacted approximately 15 percent (n=12) of the group members and indicated that we may have accidentally switched some of their ratings. After they were reminded of the two cases they had discussed, each responded a second time. The two sets of data were correlated and yielded the following co-efficients: .936 for sanctions, .915 for attribution, .942 for seriousness, and .922 for the combined measures of status.

Finally, 24 groups of raters (averaging seven per group) viewed the videotapes of the 24 discussion groups. After reading the appropriate cases and watching the tapes, the raters individually assessed the extent to which they believed the discussion group as a whole held the actors personally responsible for their behavior. The raters used the same measure of attribution as the original participants. In no

case were the rating groups aware of the nature of the experiment or of the variables under investigation. Their assessments were employed to validate the participants' self-reported perceptions of responsibility.

Results

Effectiveness of the Manipulations

The first set of analyses involved determining whether the cases discussed had elicited differences in the participants' perceptions of the status of the offenders and the seriousness of their acts. Mean differences of 3.09 [F (df=1, 70) = 215.867, $p < .001$] and 2.85 [F (df=1, 70) = 244.495, $p < .001$] in the ratings of the high and low status actors' perceived competence and admirability clearly established that the manipulation of status was successful. The correlation between the two measures of status, moreover, was .814 (df=143, $p < .001$) with an average level of agreement among the participants within groups of .661 for the competence dimension and .604 for assessments of admirability. A mean difference of 1.944 [F (df=1, 70) = 150.996, $p < .001$] additionally revealed that the two acts discussed were distinguishable in terms of their perceived seriousness, and in a manner consistent with the manipulation. The average agreement in the ratings of seriousness was .736.

Validation of the Attribution Measure

In addition to checking the degree of agreement within groups on the self-reported attribution of responsibility ratings, which was .799, we correlated the assessments of the raters who viewed the videotapes of the discussions with those of the participants. The observers, it should be remembered, rated the groups, not the persons involved in the cases. A correlational analysis based on the average attribution score assigned by the participants and the ratings assigned to them by the observers yielded a coefficient of .836 (df=47, $p < .001$). This finding indicated that self-reported attribution was remarkably consistent with the discussion

participants' actual behavior.

Principal Analyses

Because of the potentially complex nature of relationships among the research variables, we analyzed the data from two perspectives: (1) in terms of central tendency and (2) at the level of the individual. The differences in perspective, we hoped, would help establish the consistency of evidence in confirming or disconfirming the research hypothesis.

The first two analyses involved assessing the possible interaction of the status and seriousness variables on sanctioning and the attribution of responsibility. If the theoretical foundation were sound, then presumably the interaction between the manipulated variables would be significant for both measures of response. Because of the conditions under which the data were collected, the analysis of variance procedures for a Lindquist Type II design were followed.[20] For both dependent variables, only the main effect of seriousness proved significant. A mean difference of 1.555 [F (df=1, 70) = 174.69, $p < .001$] indicated more severe sanctioning of the serious act than the moderately serious act. For attribution, a mean difference of 1.014 [F (df=1, 70) = 66.698, $p < .001$] exhibited the same directional pattern. Status, then, showed neither a direct nor interactive effect on the dependent variables of interest.

On the basis of the measures of central tendency, the findings provided only partial support for the research hypothesis. The analysis of mean differences, however, can sometimes be misleading in revealing relationships among variables. As a result, our second planned type of analysis involved determining if substantial increases in the explainable variance of the sanction measure could be detected by considering its relationship to all other variables when conceived as predictors.

To assess the relative contribution of each predictor variable to the

explainable variance in sanctions, we employed multiple regression analysis. The independent variables deriving from the participants' responses consisted of attribution of responsibility, perceived seriousness of the act, perceived competence of the actor, and perceived admirability of the actor. In addition, we considered the possible independent effects of the manipulations themselves. Numerical scores of 0 and 1 were arbitrarily used to designate the two levels of each variable and denoted "actual" status and "actual" seriousness. The correlations of actual status with perceived competence and admirability were .813 (df=143, $p < .001$) and .702 (df=143, $p < .001$), respectively. For measures of actual and perceived seriousness, the correlation was .578 (df=143, $p < .001$). These data not only gave further support to the effectiveness of the manipulations but also indicated that the separate measures might lead to somewhat different estimates of explainable variance in the dependent measure.

Regression analysis, based on the six predictor variables described above, and one dependent variable, severity of sanction, yielded an index of multiple correlation of .743 [F (df=6, 137) = 28.104, $p < .001$].[21] Only three of the predictor variables, however, produced significant increments in the magnitude of R^2. Perceived seriousness, actual seriousness, and attribution of responsibility each contributed significantly to the cumulative effect of the set of predictor variables as a whole. Both measures of seriousness were positively related to the severity of sanctions the group members recommended; that is, the more serious the act, the more severe the penalty recommended. The relationship between the attribution measure and the dependent variable followed a similar pattern. The more the participants perceived the offender to be responsible for his behavior, the more harshly they were willing to sanction him. The individual correlations of these three variables with the dependent measure were as follows: (1) Perceived Seriousness, .631; (2) Actual Seriousness, .629; and (3) Attribution of Responsibility, -.618.[22] Each was

significant at the .01 level of confidence.

None of the three measures of status led to a significant increment in the value of R^2. Further inspection of their individual correlations with the sanction measure revealed that none was significantly different from 0. The coefficients for competence, admirability, and actual status were -.062, -.009, and -.001, respectively. Table 1 summarizes the complete regression analysis for all variables.

Discussion

In terms of the seriousness and attribution variables, the results of the investigation were as expected. Neither type of analysis led to a different conclusion. The role of attribution in the decision process can be seen more clearly, however, from the regression analysis results. That members of a group sanction moderately serious offenses less severely than a seriously deviant act is consistent with both conventional wisdom and existing evidence. The characteristics of the act itself, however, are not the only determinant of what sanction will be chosen, nor are they fully sufficient to account for the variation in choice. The extent to which one perceives the individual committing a socially proscribed act as personally responsible also enters into the equation. Although such perceptions are correlated with the seriousness of the act, the attribution of responsibility nonetheless makes an independent contribution to the process of deciding what penalty to impose. In this study, the correlation between perceived seriousness and the attribution of personal responsibility was -.669. Of the two, the latter bore a slightly stronger relationship to the sanction measure, but considered jointly, both account for more variance in the severity of recommended sanctions than either in isolation.

Unexpected was the failure of status to reveal a mediating influence in the judgmental process we investigated. As noted earlier, previous inquiry has revealed inconsistent tendencies, but tendencies nonetheless. In some instances, status

appears to be a liability but an asset in others. Why status in the present case failed to exhibit either tendency is difficult to say. Since the manipulation was effective, one cannot argue that the participants failed to recognize differences in the characteristics of the high and low status offenders.

One plausible explanation for the absence of relationship between status and severity of sanction is that the acts discussed had not been committed by individuals the participants actually knew; moreover, the acts themselves had no consequences for those rendering judgments. That these factors may make a difference is suggested by other research. In one study showing status effects, Wahrman asked the subjects to imagine that the high and low status figures whom they were judging were members of their group.[23] In other investigations, moreover, deviant acts attributed to individuals of varying status have constituted violations of the judging group's own norms.[24] Initially, we had assumed that cheating is a type of behavior that surely would be ego-involving for the types of individuals participating in the study and that the perpetrators of the two acts likely represented acquaintances nearly every college student would have encountered. In retrospect, however, we simply may have erred in selecting the dimensions of status we did. The kinds of factors identified in actual jury trials may be the crucial determinants of response.[25]

A second reason for the failure of status to play a significant role in the decisional process under investigation has to do with the nature of the relationship between status and sanctions. It may be non-linear. As Wahrman has pointed out, although extreme differences in status "may be necessary for a strong manipulation, they [researchers] neglect an important consideration. People at both extremes may be treated quite differently from the way anyone in the middle ranks is treated. Responses may follow a curvilinear pattern."[26] If this is true, then the failure to detect a relationship with only two points along the status continuum represented is

understandable. Given the possibility of either a U or inverted U-shaped relationship, differences in sanctions for persons at the extremes in status would be small or even nonexistent. This possibility warrants further inquiry.

A final explanation is that loss of status resulting from the behavior may have effectively destroyed any real differences between the two persons involved in the cases. It was probably a mistake to have had ratings of status made independent of the act. Our rationale, however, was that status has been considered as an antecedent influence that biases judgments of socially proscribed behavior. In adopting that posture, we neglected to consider the impact of discussion on changes in perceptions of the actors. It is conceivable that the initial advantage high status affords may dissipate as a result of interaction.[27] Many of the participants' comments reflected such a tendency. Statements focusing on the "stupidity" of an honors student's plagiarizing a play and others expressing a concern that the act may have been symptomatic of a "history" of dishonesty that had gone previously undetected suggest that status loss was occurring. If the loss was sufficient to make the two offenders indistinguishable in terms of their perceived competence and admirability, then, of course, these variables would show no relationship to the severity of sanctions recommended. Future research on the effects of status needs to consider this possible source of influence. It might well be the principal factor accounting for the inconsistencies that have been observed.

On the whole, the data generated in this investigation permit a partial description of the judgmental process involved in sanctioning certain types of deviant behavior. It appears that as the seriousness of a violation of accepted standards of behavior increases, so does the tendency to hold or view the violator as personally responsible. The greater the attribution of personal responsibility, the more severe the sanction. Seriousness alone is predictive of the severity of response but does not adequately account for how judgments are made or the variation that accompanies them. Other sources of influence undoubtedly affect such judgments, but their precise relationship to the factors identified remains to be determined.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Martin F. Kaplan, "Judgment by Juries," in Human Judgment and Decision Processes in Applied Settings, eds. Martin F. Kaplan and Steven Schwartz (New York: Academic Press, 1977), p. 38.

[2]See Muzafer Sherif and Carolyn W. Sherif, Groups in Harmony and Tension (New York: Harper and Row, 1953); Stanley Schacter, "Deviation, Rejection, and Communication," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 46 (1951), 190-207; and Ralph Wahrman, "Status, Deviance, Sanctions, and Group Discussion," Small Group Behavior, 8 (1977), 147-68.

[3]Wahrman, pp. 162-63.

[4]S. A. Mudd, "Group Sanction as a Function of Degree of Behavior Deviation and Relevance of Norm," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 8 (1968), 258-60.

[5]Fritz Heider, The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations (New York: Wiley, 1958) and Edward E. Jones and Keith E. Davis, "From Acts to Dispositions in Person Perception," in Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, Leonard Berkowitz, ed., 2 (New York: Academic Press), 224.

[6]Edward E. Jones, Keith E. Davis, and Kenneth J. Gergan, "Role Playing Variations and Their Informational Value for Person Perception," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 63 (1961), 302-10.

[7]Jones and Davis, p. 237.

[8]Solomon E. Asch, "Forming Impressions of Personality," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 41 (1946), 258-90.

[9]E. P. Hollander, "Conformity, Status, and Idiosyncrasy Credit," Psychological Review, 65 (1958), 117-27.

[10]Richard D. Schwartz and Jerome H. Skolnick, "Two Studies in Legal Stigma," Social Problems, 10 (1957), 133-42.

[11]Herbert Harari and John W. McDavid, "Situational Influences on Moral Justice: A Study of 'Finking,'" Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 11 (1969), 240-44.

[12]Wahrman, 1977.

[13]James Wiggins, Forrest Dill, and Richard Schwartz, "On 'Status Liability,'" Sociometry, 28 (1965), 197-209.

[14]Elaine Walster, Bill Walster, Darcy Abrahams, and Zita Brown, "The Effect of Liking on Overrating Another," Journal of Experimental Psychology, 2 (1966), 70-84; Milton Rokeach and Gilbert Rothman, "The Principle of Belief Congruence and the Congruity Principle as Models of Cognitive Interaction," Psychological Review, 72 (1965), 128-42; and Robert S. Wyer, "The Prediction of Evaluations of Social Role Occupants as a Function of the Favorableness, Relevance and Probability Associated with Attributes of These Occupants," Sociometry, 33 (1970), 79-96.

[15]See Ralph Wahrman, "Status, Deviance, and Sanctions: A Critical Review," Comparative Group Studies, 3 (1972), 485-504.

[16]A moderately serious act was chosen because a less serious act may not have been of sufficient concern to elicit a willingness to sanction behavior at all.

[17]Wahrman, 1972, p. 205.

[18]Procedures followed were adapted from those outlined by Edwards. See Allen L. Edwards, Techniques of Attitude Scale Construction (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1957), pp. 83-117.

[19]Heider, pp. 112-18.

[20]See E. F. Lindquist, Design and Analysis of Experiments in Psychology and Education (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1953), pp. 267-73.

[21]The procedure followed was that outlined in W. J. Dixon, Biomedical Computer Programs (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968), pp. 233-58.

[22]Because of the scoring procedure, the negative correlation between attribution of responsibility and severity of sanction should be treated as a positive relationship.

[23]Wahrman, 1977.

[24]See, for example, E. P. Hollander, "Some Effects of Perceived Status on Responses to Innovative Behavior," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 63 (1961), 247-50.

[25]Among the factors influencing judgment in real life situations are socio-economic status, race, and marital status. See Kaplan, p. 38.

[26]Wahrman, 1972, pp. 206-7.

[27]Wahrman, in fact, has argued that loss of esteem may well accompany a sanction as a response to an implicit exchange agreement the high status actor is perceived as having violated. See Ralph Wahrman, "Status, Deviance, and Sanctions," Pacific Sociological Review, 13 (1970), 229-40.

TABLE 1

REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF SIX VARIABLES INFLUENCING PUNITIVE JUDGMENT

Variable	R	R^2	INC.
Perceived Seriousness	.6315	.3987	.3987*
Actual Seriousness	.7098	.5038	.1051*
Attribution of Responsibility	.7411	.5492	.0454*
Perceived Admirability	.7413	.5495	.0002
Perceived Competence	.7427	.5516	.0022
Actual Status	.7428	.5517	.0001

*Significant at the .01 level of confidence.

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